

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 ISO-00 AGR-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

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AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

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TAGS: EFIN, ETRD, EEC, XM, UY

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN-LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC CONFERENCE IN
URUGUAY

REF : MONTEVIDEO 550 (NOTAL)

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO AMEMBASSIES IN OTHER OAS COUNTRIES

1. SUMMARY. THE ECONOMIC CONFERENCE BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA (LA)
AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EC) WHICH WAS HELD MARCH
4-6 AT PUNTA DEL ESTE DISCUSSED INCONCLUSIVELY THE AGENDA OF
EC GENERAL TARIFF PREFERENCES FOR LA AND FINANCIAL AND TECH-
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NOLOGICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO AREAS. ORGANIZED WITH

CONSIDERABLE FANFARE BY THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ITALIAN LATIN AMERICAN INSTITUTE (ILAI), THE CONFERENCE'S DELIBERATIONS WERE CHARACTERIZED LARGELY BY LATIN AMERICAN COMPLAINTS AND EUROPEAN EXPRESSIONS OF GOOD INTENTIONS. END SUMMARY

2. LATIN AMERICA GENERALLY SENT HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATION TO THIS CONFERENCE, IN PART BECAUSE THE GOU ITSELF, AS HOST COUNTRY, HAD ASKED OTHER LA GOVERNMENTS FOR PRESTIGIOUS DELEGATIONS. THE GOU DELEGATION, HEADED BY FONMIN JUAN CARLOS BLANCO, INCLUDED MINISTER ETCHEVERRY STIRLING OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY FONMIN VIGNES, THE PARAGUAYAN REPORTEDLY BY FONMIN SAPENA PASTOR, AND SEVERAL OTHER LA DELEGATIONS WERE LED BY CABINET MINISTERS. OBSERVERS WERE PRESENT FROM SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE OAS, THE IDB, ECLA AND LAFTA.

3. THE ILAI, HEADED BY THE PRESIDENT, AMBASSADOR ALEJANDRO DEUSTVA OF PERU, SERVED AS SECRETARIAT FOR THE CONFERENCE. OUTSIDE OF THE ILAI ITSELF, THE EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION CONSISTED ESSENTIALLY OF EC OFFICIALS--CHIEF AMONG WHOM WAS EC VICE PRESIDENT CARLO SCARASCIA MUGNOZZA--A SPECIAL ITALIAN PRESENCE, AND LOCAL AMBASSADORS OF EC COUNTRIES. SCARASCIA SEEMED TO ADD UNINTENDED INSULT TO THE INJURY SOME LATIN AMERICANS WERE FEELING OVER THE IMBALANCE IN THE LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION OF THE TWO REGIONS WHEN HE INSISTED ON FOLLOWING HIS ORIGINAL PLAN BY DEPARTING THE DAY BEFORE THE CONFERENCE ENDED INSTEAD OF STAYING UNTIL THE FINAL DAY AS SOME HAD HOPED.

4. ON THE CONFERENCE'S OPENING DAY, ARGENTINE FONMIN VIGNES LED THE ATTACK ON THE EC'S POLICIES TOWARD LATIN AMERICA. HE DESCRIBED THE EVOLUTION OF EC COOPERATION AS "SLOW AND INCOMPLETE", AND HE ACCUSED THE EC OF NOT HESITATING TO HARM VITAL LATIN AMERICAN INTERESTS WITH POLICIES SUCH AS THAT FOLLOWED ON MEAT IMPORTATION. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY GOU MINISTER ETCHEVERRY CONTINUED THE OFFENSIVE, CALLING FOR "AN URGENT RECONSIDERATION OF THE EC'S TRADE POLICY TOWARD OUR BEEF, BECAUSE IT IS A MATTER THAT SERIOUSLY HARMS OUR INTERESTS AND THAT RUNS THE DANGER OF FRUSTRATING OUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THEIR VERY FOUNDATIONS." HE CRITICIZED THE LIMITED SCOPE AND COMPLICATED NATURE OF THE EC'S TARIFF PREFERENCES FOR LATIN AMERICA, AND HIS LINE OF ATTACK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS FOLLOWED BY THE MEXICAN UNDERSECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND OTHERS.

5. THE EC'S RESPONSES TO THESE ACCUSATIONS CONSISTED MAINLY OF PROTESTATIONS OF GOOD WILL. EC VICE PRESIDENT SCARASCIA SUGGESTED THAT EC AND LA REPRESENTATIVES CHOOSE A FEW KEY TOPICS ON WHICH THEIR EXPERTS COULD WORK OUT PROPOSED SOLUTIONS IN TIME FOR A SIMILAR MEETING IN THE FUTURE. EC OFFICIALS ARE SAID

ALSO TO HAVE DEFENDED THEMSELVES AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER WITH REMARKS THAT THE EC IS NOT A CHARITY ORGANIZATION AND THAT IT IS OBLIGED TO GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO AFRICA AND ASIA.

6. THE CUBAN DELEGATION, HEADED BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE MARCELO FERNANDEZ, BEHAVED WITH A DISCRETION BEFITTING ITS SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE PRESENCE, CONCENTRATING ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN A PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY FERNANDEZ. THE CUBAN MINISTER WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT LATIN AMERICA SHOULD UNITE AS A REGION, THAT CUBA HAS BEEN ABLE TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER DESPITE THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE ECONOMIC BLOCKADE, THAT CUBA WAS INVITED TO THIS CONFERENCE BY THE ILAI BUT IS DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BY CECLA, AND THAT THE OAS WILL NOT LAST MUCH LONGER.

7. THE CONFERENCE'S FINAL REPORT EMPHASIZED THE VALUE OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EC AND LA, AND THE NEED FOR FURTHER MEETINGS OF THIS SORT. THE EC VICE PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTION THAT A FEW SPECIFIC SUBJECTS BE CHOSEN FOR EXPERT STUDY RECEIVED FAVORABLE MENTION. LA CONCERNS OVER THE EC'S AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND THE EC'S PREFERENCE FOR AFRICAN AND ASIAN EX-COLONIES WERE DULY NOTED.

8. COMMENT: IN POST-CONFERENCE STATEMENTS, THE GOU FONMIN AND OTHERS PRAISED THE EXERCISE IN DIALOGUE THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE AND DECLARED THEMSELVES SATISFIED WITH THE MEETING. PRIVATE OPINIONS MAY BE LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN THOSE VOICED IN PUBLIC. EVEN THOUGH THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN LABELLED ONLY DELIBERATIVE FROM THE START, SOME LATIN AMERICANS WERE APPARENTLY DISAPPOINTED AT THE PAUCITY OF CONCRETE RESULTS. SOME EUROPEANS WERE APPARENTLY LESS ACCUSTOMED THAN USG OFFICIALS TO CONFRONTING LATIN AMERICANS AT AN INTERNATIONAL MEETING WHEN THE LATTER FIND THEMSELVES UNITED, UNDERDEVELOPED AND WRONGED.

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED OTHER OAS EMBASSIES.

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